How do you cut down a tree at Swarthmore?

Short answer: with a chain saw. Long answer: Though it took just one day in August to fell this weeping silver linden at the southeast corner of Parrish Hall, many months of study and discussion led up to the decision. The Scott Arboretum staff, wanting to be sure that the tree could not be saved, brought in an outside specialist who did test borings to confirm that extensive internal decay made the tree a threat to life and property. Following the distribution of an explanatory memo to the campus community, it and another linden west of Parrish were removed. Efforts are being made to save the large red oak near Sharples Dining Hall—the one with the swing—that is suffering from root rot caused by years of activity around its base.
8 The Campus That Never Was
In 1930 it was clear that Swarthmore was on the verge of a building boom. Architects were hired and plans were drawn, but the grand designs fell afoul of the Depression and World War II. Two alumnae look at the history and architecture of these unbuilt ideas.

By Elizabeth Weber ’98 and Margaret Helfand ’69

14 Agents of Change
Ellen Barry ’75 is a fighter against injustice for women prisoners and their families. Rebecca Nelson ’82 is engaged in a different battle—against the world’s worst crop disease. Each “genius” is among this year’s recipients of MacArthur Fellowships.

By William Rodarmor

18 Fame
Why are we so fascinated by famous people? “There are two worlds now,” says Leo Braudy, “the media world and all the momentarily grand things that happen in it and the world of normality, which seems constantly shrinking in significance.”

By Leo Braudy ’63

58 Abroad With the Quakers in 1952
Rebuilding war-torn Europe was the goal of idealistic young Swarthmoreans who worked in camps across the continent as part of the Quaker International Volunteers. That summer remains with them as “a defining experience of our adult lives.”

By Mary Alzina Stone Dale ’52

2 Letters
4 Collection
25 Alumni Digest
28 Class Notes
31 Deaths
45 Recent Books by Alumni
IT’S BEEN A BUMPER YEAR FOR ACORNS. Each morning, as I walk from car to office along the oak-lined path behind Beardsley Hall, thousands of little nuts cover the ground. I often try to dribble one like a soccer ball, keeping it in front of me until it bounces out of bounds into the grass.

The oaks along my way were planted decades ago astride a road that, until recently, connected College Avenue to Whittier Place. I often tried to park along it on days when I arrived early enough to get one of its shaded spaces, just a few steps from my office in Parrish Hall. After vehicles were banished, I started to walk its pleasant granite-bordered curve, kicking acorns in September, shuffling through late-autumn leaves, pressing my prints in the January snow, and worrying in spring about the patch of lawn that struggles to establish itself on poor construction soil behind Kohlberg Hall.

There’s a plan to all of this—a campus is no accident. Knowing how big these oaks would grow, someone marked the distance between the trunks before digging the saplings in. Planners and presidents drew these curves on paper, envisioning Swarthmore as they thought a college should be—with buildings full of intellect and purpose, but also paths and trees and gardens to knit it all together. Our Quaker founders didn’t build Parrish at the bottom of the hill. Their vision came with a view—and another, more famous oak-lined path that is everyone’s mind’s-eye picture of Swarthmore.

How surprising and delightful then are the plans for “The Campus That Never Was” (page 8). Here we learn that my walk behind Beardsley might have taken me along a sunken football field to a six-story, glass-fronted library. Or that Parrish Hall could have been altered to look like something from Williamsburg—or (heavens!) Williamstown.

We may smile and scratch our heads at these ideas. Yet today’s College leaders are planners too, looking forward once again as Swarthmore completes a two-year planning process—one that will likely lead to new buildings as well as new academic initiatives. As we look back at the campus that never was, we have to believe with confidence that our own blueprints for the future will be even better drawn.

Yet the important thing is not the plan itself, but the vision behind it. The unrealized plans of the past amuse us, but they were bold ideas—and, a little like one of those acorns, they were seeds of today’s roots and dreams. Those acorns underfoot are intentional—as is, I suspect, my newfound attention to these trees.

—J.L.
come true: dark wood-paneled rooms, the fragrance of bread baking, musical instruments everywhere, pillows made of old carpets, happy children, invigorating conversation, and so much laughter. I was invited to stay for dinner, and there began a friendship that I treasure to this day.

Three years later I asked Gil’s OK to take his course in ethics. He put his arm around my shoulder and said, “of course I’d love to have you, but are you sure you want to take it? It’s dreadfully dull stuff.” It wasn’t.

In 1969, five years after Swarthmore, I applied for discharge from the U.S. Army as a conscientious objector (CO). Gil’s nonjudgmental, wise counsel was invaluable; and the letter he wrote in support of my CO application was commented on by every hearing official I met as being one of the most persuasive documents they had ever read.

Gil has been a touchstone in my life. Soft of speech, he is a man of powerful moral force. He is warm, kind, wise, and a loyal and devoted friend and teacher. Nor can I think of Gil without thinking of his dear wife, Mary. I’ve never known a couple so devoted to one another and so willing to share love with so many others.

Swarthmore College has given me many things for which I am grateful; Gil Stott’s friendship is right at the top.

BENNETT LORBER ’64
Philadelphia

Into the philosophical fray
To the Editor:
I was pleased to see Richie Schuldenfreu’s confusion between morality and gravity make it into the historical record “How Do You Live a Good Life?” June 1998). He never did let that chair loose upon my head, but his arguments stretched our minds and passions. We read the Locke, watched the performances, pondered the utility of truth, weighed the connection (if any) between liberty and justice. Thoughts racing and other classes all but ignored, we knew Mr. Schuldenfreu had drawn us into the philosophical fray.

Please turn to page 26

POSTINGS

I’m wondering what I’ve learned from being with these sweet, crazy children.

Driving to my first meeting at the Women’s Association for Women’s Alternatives (WAWA), a shelter for troubled families where John Dolan ’01 and I taught conflict resolution to children this summer, I missed the turn at the country road where they’re located. I pulled up at a nearby chemical plant. A middle-aged white man was getting out of his car when I asked him, “Can you please tell me where WAWA is? The shelter?” The stranger nodded and looked over my young, confused, frustrated face. I realized that he probably thought I was looking for the shelter because I was running away from an abusive partner. Accidentally being seen as a victim felt strange, like a rough new shirt I didn’t mean to put on and wasn’t sure how to take off.

After going under a rusty railroad bridge, I drove up WAWA’s narrow, bumpy road and saw several African-American children playing in the front yard. I entered a world that didn’t seem real after having spent a year on Swarthmore’s manicured campus—but it was a place of strength and beauty, where an entire family lives in one room, the children are already survivors, and women put their lives back together. WAWA’s world is real to me now, and I’m wondering what I’ve learned from being with these sweet, crazy children.

I’m thinking about all my confusion and uncertainty after the first day, when three preschool children were punching each other, and none of our planned activities lasted long enough. I was worried none of the kids would like me. Now I know them; I know how sweet and kind they are when they share with each other, how passionate and stubborn they are when fighting, and how affectionate they are when they reach up for a hug.

But I’ve learned from working at WAWA how different my life in the ivory tower is from the reality of a 5-year-old boy who has spent his entire life in shelters. Hearing from the children’s program coordinator why certain kids automatically recoil when you lean over them (they have been beaten so often) has made me question the purpose of my Swarthmore education. In my four years here, I want to be given the tools not only to understand the world but to improve it. Swarthmore’s commitment to community service is essential to that quality education; discussion of theories and trends cannot substitute for leaving the campus and getting our hands dirty.

I got another dose of “reality” earlier this summer. I was sitting in a courtroom, listening to prisoners being sentenced as part of an internship at a news radio station. Nearly all the people being sentenced were black men, which made me think of the children at the shelter, who are mostly African-American boys. I began imagining how these men—who were being sentenced for such crimes as assault, rape, and robbery—must have looked when they were very young: probably a great deal like the boys that John and I are teaching. I wondered what happened on the path that led them to this courtroom, to being sentenced to jail in white uniforms, their hands cuffed together.

Through all my thoughts ran a feeling of regret, a feeling that their lives didn’t need to be this way. I believe we have the ability to change the course of events and twist fate into new forms. Our education is useful only if we do more than discuss and understand the world—and work to change it.

As Swarthmore students we’re lucky that we don’t worry about our next meal. But the people who pick the fruit we eat and sew the jeans we wear often do. Without plans to help others, how can the discussion of theories and the accumulation of knowledge justify that we benefit from the existing power structure while others suffer so this system can continue to exist? As the English philosopher Herbert Spencer said, “The great aim of education is not knowledge but action.”

Liz Cho is a sophomore from Cochranville, Pa.
On building consensus

Editor's Note: The following is an edited version of President Alfred H. Bloom's remarks at Commencement on June 1, 1998.

As Swarthmore students you have come to embrace the highest standards of clear and creative thought and have invested your energies and talents in preparing to meet these standards throughout your lives. And by virtue of your eagerness to grapple with complex ideas; to draw fine distinctions among them; to see through them to their significant points; to create metaphors that elucidate them; and to express with coherence, subtlety; and artistry the insights you have gained, you will be bearers of a tradition of intellectual excellence that is at the heart of this College's distinction.

As Swarthmore students you have also come to embrace a particularly demanding standard of interpersonal respect, anchored in our Quaker tradition—a standard that requires you not only to extend civility and fair treatment to others but also to go beyond that minimum form of impersonal respect—to recognize and value the personal and intellectual qualities others bring, to genuinely consider their points of view, and to take responsibility for creating environments in which they are appreciated and empowered. By your practice of this more exacting standard of active, personal respect, you will be bearers of a second of Swarthmore's most prized traditions.

But today I want to consider a third, perhaps less often cited, outcome of your Swarthmore education, which is, in fact, grounded in the exercise of intellectual excellence and of active personal respect—namely, your embrace of consensus building as a preferred approach to institutional, community, and societal governance.

By consensus building I mean that approach to group decision making that starts from candid dialogue and proceeds through application of the group's powers of clear and creative thought to shape a negotiated view that all or almost all participants can endorse. It is an approach founded on active respect for one's colleagues and on the conviction, based on that respect, that decisions reached through a collaborative process will likely be of more lasting and comprehensive quality than decisions reached by individuals on their own.

This college, whether at the level of the Board, the faculty, Student Council, or its broader committee structure, has chosen to rely primarily on processes of consensus building to steer its course and guard its quality. Through participating in these processes, you have helped set educational directions; helped shape community policies; constructed annual budgets; recruited new members of our faculty and staff; encouraged and guided the development of a more successful pluralistic community; and, over the past year, through long-term planning, helped establish College priorities for the decade ahead.

Through participating in these processes, and being exposed to them, you have acquired the habit of listening fairly to others’ points of view and of honing and timing the presentation of your own. You have cultivated your own skill at introducing just that perspective, or just that bit of humor, which preserves a collegial atmosphere and keeps the constructive process on track. You have seen how engaging processes of consensus building enable the members of a diverse community to come to recognize the personal and intellectual qualities of their fellow members and, thereby, overcome tendencies to stereotype and devalue.

You have at times wished that this mode of governance demanded less of a commitment of time and energy, but you have nevertheless come to appreciate the sharper clarity it so often yields and the nature and quality of community it creates and sustains.

Through insisting on and facilitating consensus building within the institutions, communities, and societies you govern and shape, you will introduce a style of leadership that maximizes shared respect, shared understanding, shared conceptual effort, and mutual empowerment and that generates collegialship, ownership, and dedication to common purpose. In so doing, you will distinguish yourselves in a third, vital way as bearers of a Swarthmore education.

We look forward with great anticipation to the steady stream of accomplishments, large and small, that lie ahead for you and for which, whether we deserve it or not, we will be pleased to accept partial credit. As you take on broader responsibilities across the spectrum of American and international life, we will rely on your exercise of intellectual excellence, active personal respect, and leadership through consensus building to communicate to those who do not know us what is so special about this institution and so essential about the kind of education it provides.

We will also rely on your wise counsel to help keep Swarthmore on a responsible course and on your financial support to help preserve its excellence.

And, most important, we will rely on your continuing attachment to a community which promises you a warm welcome, and that same sense of ownership, whenever you return.
Students launch Web-based research journal

Give a Swarthmore student a void, and his or her first instinct is to fill it. In this case Andrew Medina-Marino ’00, taking two years off to do research, saw that “a lot of undergraduates were doing good, high-quality research, as good as any postdoctoral graduate student or scientist,” but they had no outlet to showcase their efforts.

So, along with two labmates from Brown and Duke, he decided to launch the National Journal of Young Investigators (JYI), a World Wide Web–only “publication.” Medina-Marino hopes to have the first issue up in November. (The site already exists at www.jyi.org. You can log on and read about the journal’s philosophy and how to submit papers.)

The journal will contain six to eight scientific papers each in three main sections: biology and biomedical sciences, mathematics, physical sciences (chemistry, physics, geology, earth science, and astronomy), and engineering sciences. To find material for the first edition, Medina-Marino and his staff have e-mailed more than 1,000 professors and undergraduate scientists in internship programs all over the country.

Medina-Marino is one of five members of the journal’s board, but he has enlisted the help of about 45 other undergraduate students to act as reviewers. “We wanted the journal to be peer reviewed, and we see it as acting as an educational opportunity for both students who submit papers and for those who review them.”

He’s taking the current academic year off, he said, “to coordinate the entire endeavor, visit potential funding sources, and travel around the country to recruit student editors, papers, and support.

Some funding from private corporations is already in place to support their efforts, and a grant is pending from the National Science Foundation. Duke University is paying for the managerial portion of the journal, and Swarthmore is funding students to continue developing the Web site. The students are also being advised by editors at Science and Science Next Wave magazines about copyright, editorial review procedures, and other issues.

Majoring in biology and doing independent study on race relations, Medina-Marino hopes to continue work in biology in graduate school. In the meantime he and his staff are already making plans to continue the journal long after they’re no longer eligible to be a part of it.

In the long run, he says, “it would be great to keep the editorial leadership for JYI at an undergraduate institution.”

Like Swarthmore.

Former Managers Lippincott and Post have died

Two former members of the Swarthmore Board of Managers have died: J. Gordon Lippincott ’31, on April 29, and Helen Shilcock Post ’36, on June 4.

Elected to the Board in 1969, Lippincott was a consultant who helped design the Campbell soup label, the Tucker automobile, and the interior of the Nautilus nuclear submarine. He is also credited with pioneering the new field of corporate identity.

J. Gordon Lippincott ’31

While on the Board, Lippincott served on the development and property committees, and he also served as a member of Alumni Council. Along with his wife, Edith Bowman Lippincott ’32, he helped establish the College’s Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

Mrs. Post became a member of the Board in 1966. A lifelong volunteer, she was secretary of her class for nearly 25 years as well as class agent and chair of the reunion gift committee. She also was a member of Alumni Council and served as Alumni Association secretary.

Also active in the community, Mrs. Post served as chair of the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association Girls’ 18 championships and was active in the parents’ auxiliary of Germantown Friends School.

Helen Shilcock Post ’36
What’s next for welfare reform?

By Robinson Hollister, Joseph Wharton Professor of Economics

The welfare reform legislation of 1996 was clearly the most dramatic and sweeping change since the creation of the federal-state Aid to Dependent Children (later known as AFDC) as part of the Social Security Act of 1935. The new Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) replaced AFDC with a program called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Will it work as intended—to—in the phrase often used by President Bill Clinton—“end welfare as we know it?”

As a member of the Committee to Review Welfare Reform Research, a national group of scholars who will follow and assess studies that are being done on the effects of the new welfare laws, I’ve been watching the evolution of the new state programs.

For the uninitiated, the major differences between TANF and AFDC are:

- Federal payments to the states are made in the form of a fixed block grant rather than federal matching of state expenditures.
- TANF recipients are required to work after two years of assistance, though states may set work requirements sooner than two years.
- Individuals are limited to five years of federal welfare assistance in their lifetimes, though states may exempt up to 20 percent of their caseload from this limit.

Several factors explain the push for reform. First, there was a surprising rise in the AFDC caseload even while the economy was growing. Between 1983 and late 1989, the national caseload fluctuated around 3.8 million families, but after the mild recession of 1989, it started to rise, reaching 5.1 million families in early 1994. This was puzzling because employment was also rising sharply.

Second, the growing percentage of births occurring out of wedlock and the rise in the proportion of children living with a single parent drew greater public attention. The public perception was that teenage childbearing was skyrocketing, even though it was actually declining. (Between 1991 and 1995, birthrates for girls age 15–19 dropped by 8.5 percent, but because non–teenage childbearing was declining faster, births to teens as a proportion of all births were rising.)

Social commentators argued that AFDC was creating a dependent population that would not respond to improved employment opportunities, that it was inducing an increase in single-parent families—a reformulation of the “culture of poverty” arguments of the 1960s.

These factors, among others, influenced the shape of the 1996 reform. At passage, PRWORA was hailed by Republicans, by the president, and by some Democrats as a great achievement, a delivery on the promise to “end welfare as we know it.” Critics of the PRWORA argued that giving nearly complete authority to the states to limit benefits would create a “race to the bottom.” Many liberal Democrats decried the reforms as draconian, and two top officials in the Department of Health and Human Services resigned in protest of the president’s signing of the bill. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan predicted that a half-million children would soon be “sleeping on grates in our cities,” which prompted one wag to posit that this would be the Republicans’ and Clinton’s “Grate Society Program.”

Most states have chosen not to implement the most stringent work requirements or benefit cuts—at least not yet. In fact, to encourage work effort, many states have made it easier for recipients to have higher earnings and still receive some cash benefits. A few states have not only enhanced child care benefits but have extended child care subsidies beyond the TANF-eligible population and are even providing transportation assistance. Other states, however, have stuck with the relatively low cash benefits they provided under AFDC and have imposed stiffer work requirements than those required under the federal legislation.

Mullan Tennis Center ... Construction will begin this fall for the College’s new state-of-the-art tennis and fitness center. Located behind Ware Pool, it will house three tennis courts to be used by Swarthmore’s men’s and women’s intercollegiate varsity teams and the broader College community. The center, to be completed in early 1999, will feature championship-caliber court surfaces, lighting, and spacing, and it will provide above-court viewing for approximately 100 people. It will also have a 4,000-square-foot fitness area, including cardiovascular and resistance weight machines, overlooking the courts and the football field. The center is a gift of Jerome Kohlberg ’46 and, at his request, will be named in honor of Michael Mullan, professor of physical education and coach of the men’s tennis program since 1978.
Since 1994, caseloads for cash assistance (AFDC and now TANF) have been declining sharply, from 5.1 million families to 3.2 million in March 1998. Designers of PWORA have hailed this decline as a result of the implementation of the new programs. The caseload, however, was already declining sharply before the passage of the legislation. In my view, economists have not been able to rigorously explain the rise in the caseload in the early 1990s in an expanding economy and are unlikely to be able to explain the subsequent decline.

Now everyone is interested in trying to understand what is happening to those persons who would have received AFDC under the old program but are no longer on welfare today. Another central question is what will happen when families or individuals hit the five-year lifetime limit on TANF benefits?

I have been looking at studies of welfare waiver demonstrations in Florida, Iowa, and Minnesota that encourage those on welfare to increase their earnings by reducing the rate at which cash benefits are decreased as earnings rise. These studies show that, indeed, such incentives will increase the earnings of single-parent families on welfare. Because benefits fall more slowly as earnings increase, however, the reduction in total welfare payments is not proportional to the increase in earnings. Thus we may have greater work effort in the welfare population but not as many rapidly leaving cash assistance. It is possible that individuals on welfare will make a good-faith effort to get jobs and increase their earnings but still not get completely off welfare and eventually run into the time limits.

Will the public and politicians still want to enforce time limits in these circumstances? Was it the idea that people on welfare did not work much that led to pressure for reform? If so, will the public be more tolerant of a system that generates considerable work effort, even though some persons will continue to need cash grants and services, such as child care, to escape poverty?

The welfare waiver demonstration in Florida had strong time limits, and there is some early reporting on the experience of a small sample (11 percent) who could have hit the limits by June 1997. For them, the limits seemed neither to speed up nor slow down the rate at which they exited welfare.

What’s next for welfare reform? Two issues stand out: First, there is every reason to believe that the major declines in welfare rolls have been among those with the best qualifications for work (e.g., previous work experience and reasonable levels of education). Yet there is surely among the welfare population a percentage who will be unable to hold a job because of mental illness, substance abuse, or attitudes and behavior that even the most empathetic employers cannot tolerate. We do not know the size of that group, and no one seems to be thinking about what kind of safety net we might have for this “unemployable” population.

Second, the real test of viability of welfare reform will come when we have a major economic recession. The United States is currently enjoying the lowest unemployment rates in decades, and the ability of the labor market to absorb those coming off—or those who would have been on—welfare could hardly be better. When the downturn comes, what will happen to these folks? In the old AFDC system, federal dollars would rise in a recession as the welfare caseloads increased. But the size of the block grant for TANF is fixed, and any new response to recession will have to come from state revenues. I see little evidence that anyone in the “welfare expert” community is thinking about what changes should be made to temper the impact of a recession on those low-wage workers who have so recently struggled to attach themselves to the workforce.

“`The real test of viability of welfare reform will come when we have a major economic recession,” says Hollister.
Editor's Note: With the completion last year of the College’s $30 million North Campus Project, which included the building of Kohlberg Hall and the complete renovation of Trotter, major construction projects have halted on campus.

But not for long. A comprehensive long-range planning effort currently under way will lead to a new set of goals and priorities for the next century that will doubtless include further renovations and building projects.

A subcommittee of the College Planning Committee (CPC) has examined the College’s physical plant. Its preliminary report, presented to the CPC last spring, identified five potential areas of improvement: renovation of and addition to the DuPont Science Building, renovation of Parrish Hall, a new residence hall, renovation of and addition to McCabe library, and a new facility for student activities.

Swarthmore’s current position of academic and financial strength allows for measured and thoughtful planning, with the expectation that the College’s future needs will be met. But it wasn’t always so, as College history buff Elizabeth Weber ’98 learned during many hours of research in the Friends Historical Library. We also asked architect Margaret Helfand ’69 to contribute her professional opinion of the “the campus that never was.”

In 1930 it was clear that Swarthmore was on the verge of a building boom. The size of the student body had doubled since the turn of the century, to nearly 700. The dining room could not hold the ever-increasing number of students; the library was in desperate need of more space; the men’s and women’s gymnasiums needed replacing; the observatory was situated far too close to the new Clothier Memorial Hall; Worth Hall had been designed as half a quadrangle, which would surely someday be completed; and funds had already been donated for the Edward Martin Biological Laboratory.

With so many projects anticipated, President Frank Aydelotte presented two master plans for the long-term development of the campus to the Board of Managers, so that new buildings would be placed in an aesthetically pleasing way and underground utilities could be located efficiently.

But Aydelotte could not foresee the extent of the Great Depression. The Lamb-Miller Field House opened in 1934.

The best-laid plans for Swarthmore’s campus weren’t always realized, but good sense and good ideas have prevailed over time.

Text by Elizabeth Weber ’98
Captions by Margaret Helfand ’69

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But Aydelotte could not foresee the extent of the Great Depression. The Lamb-Miller Field House opened in 1934.
The Karcher and Smith Comprehensive Plan of 1931 shows a remarkably clear and orderly strategy for campus expansion that still guides the College today. Buildings are located so as to create enclosed courtyards or larger quadrangles. The upper, or north, campus contains the academic buildings, and the lower, or south, campus contains the residence halls. Athletic areas are moved away from the main campus to across Chester Road and below the railroad. These recommendations are visible in the organization of campus buildings built from that year to the present.

The series of ad hoc additions that had by 1931 been tacked onto the rear of Parish Hall are proposed to be removed, and new academic buildings are arrayed on the perimeter of a new “Main Quad” that is centered on the axis formed by Magill Walk and Parrish Hall. Beardsley Hall creates a link between this new, large quad and the renamed “Science Quad.” A third quadrangle, the “North Quad,” is proposed for the academic precinct in the area north of Hicks and Papazian halls.

Although the academic buildings follow a rigorous orthogonal organization, it is interesting to note that the “Men’s Quad” (an enlarged double courtyard scheme at Wharton Hall that would have more than doubled the quantity of men’s housing) and the “Women’s Quad” (another multiple courtyard, here appended to Worth Hall and Bond Memorial) are aligned with axes diagonal to the main campus. The expansion of housing envisioned at the Wharton site is of particular interest at this time at the College because this site is one of several options being discussed for a new residence hall.
Aydelotte could not foresee the extent of the Depression and its effect on the College’s ability to raise new funds.

and Martin Biological Laboratory in 1937, but fund-raising campaigns of the scale needed to complete the plan had become unrealistic. The money that had been donated already for the relocation of the observatory was used instead to improve the existing facility and to renovate space for the departments of Mathematics and Psychology. A temporary addition was built behind the library. The Swarthmore Preparatory School folded during the Depression, and the College eventually bought the Prep’s buildings, renaming three of them Palmer, Pittenger, and Roberts halls, easing the space shortage.

World War II further delayed completion of the master plan. Incomes rose, but building materials were needed for the war effort. The Board of Managers approved the expansion of Beardsley Hall in 1943, but the local War Planning Board vetoed the project, and so Beardsley was not enlarged to its present size until after the end of the war. Plans for an art deco–style North Campus Project lay dormant.

At the end of the war, planning began again in earnest. With some students sleeping in the gym, the need for a new dormitory was obvious. A larger library and a new science building were also high priorities. The Board of Managers believed that with higher income taxes, wealthy individuals who could donate entire buildings would become increasingly scarce; however, with incomes rising at the end of the war, they decided that a general fund-raising campaign should begin as soon as possible.

But the designs drawn in 1946 would never appear on Swarthmore’s campus. Swarthmore leased and then purchased the Mary Lyon School buildings, again easing the housing shortage without constructing a new dormitory.

In 1935, with the intent of actually constructing new buildings, a pragmatic and straightforward plan was drafted by the renowned campus architects, Cram and Ferguson of Boston. A new Main Quad takes shape, defined by a proposed library to the north of Parrish Hall and a new observatory at the opposite end. Strangely, however, instead of a traditional landscaped quad, the crisp rectangular space is neatly filled by a football field. But the most intriguing aspect of all is the two stepped grass terraces for spectator seating surrounding the rectangle, creating an elegantly bordered and recessed stage for the ritual enactment of the prototypical college sport, so popular in that era.

It is remarkable that a small college campus that already had two observatories should find it a priority, in 1935, to build a third. Perhaps this was another aspect of the forward-thinking attitude of President Aydelotte, which is no less visionary than the proposed style of architecture. The emphasis on simple, bold geometric lines of the complex coupled with the use of the local stone and the incorporation of internal courtyard areas, so characteristic of the older Swarthmore buildings, make it an exciting prospect—truly a temple to science.
Two designs for a new library, prepared in 1935 and 1936, illustrate a curious evolution in architectural taste at Swarthmore. The 1935 version (top) is contemporaneous with the proposal for the observatory and shows a bold, symmetrical massing of rectangular volumes with flat roofs and flush facades, articulated in local stone with horizontal bands of light stone, probably limestone. The two projecting central wings create a recessed entry court overlooking the south end of the football field.

Recessed spandrel panels, possibly of metal, recall the facades of Rockefeller Center and many other landmark buildings of the era. The Martin Biological Laboratory—the only one of the proposed buildings actually realized in that period—is distinguished by its use of decorative spandrel panels in the vertical window slots between the stone sections of its facades.

The next year, however, a much more futuristic idea surfaced for the library. Instead of the earlier approach, which incorporated a traditional balance between the vertical window openings and the horizontal stone bands, the vertical elements of the 1936 plan dominate the facades as huge window walls reaching from ground to sky. Even the pencil rendering is bolder and more abstract.

Exciting as this proposal is from an architectural history viewpoint, we are fortunate that funding was not available to realize these dreams. It is interesting that Parrish Hall is not included in the background of either rendering, even though it would have been visible. This was before the days that “contextual” was used in the discussion of architectural design. Kohlberg Hall, which eventually was built on this site, stands as a more comfortable neighbor to Parrish, with its masonry walls and punched windows.
Unexpected inflation eroded the value of the funds that had been raised, and building costs did not fall back to their prewar levels. Faculty salaries began to rise again after a 15-year freeze, further reducing the funds available for buildings.

Eventually all three of the buildings proposed in 1946 were built, but in the intervening years, their appearances changed beyond recognition. The women’s dormitory, which completed the Worth quadrangle, became Willets, opening in 1959. The science hall north of Parrish became the DuPont Science Building, which opened in 1960. And the library on the east side of Parrish was McCabe, finished in 1968.

Since 1946, there appear to be almost no designs drawn for buildings that were never constructed. In part this is because the College had selected Vincent Kling as College architect by 1957 and saw no need to solicit alternative designs. Kling designed DuPont, Sharples, McCabe, Dana, and Hallowell. And in recent years, buildings haven’t been designed at Swarthmore until the funds for their completion have been committed.

Elizabeth Weber ’98 majored in economics and is working at the Census Bureau in Washington, D.C. Her article “Swarthmore and the NSA” appeared in the September 1997 Bulletin. She gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Mary Ellen Grafflin Chijioke ’67, curator of the Friends Historical Library.

Margaret Helfand ’69 finished her undergraduate education with a degree in architecture at UC–Berkeley. She is the principal of Margaret Helfand Architects in New York, lead architects and planners for the recently completed North Campus Project, including the design of Kohlberg Hall and renovations of Trotter Hall.

After World War II, Swarthmore launched a $5 million campaign to increase the endowment and expand the facilities to better accommodate both academic and residential growth. Three new buildings were designed in 1946, and drawings were displayed in the Phoenix with an announcement of the campaign. Ultimately none were built according to the original designs by an unnamed architect.

A women’s dormitory was proposed adjacent to Worth Hall, respectfully following the forms and materials of the original complex. The stone walls, gable roofs, dormers, bay windows, slate roofs, and square corner tower of the proposed design would have provided a welcome closure to the unfinished...
This science building, proposed in 1946 for the northern end of Cram and Ferguson’s Main Quad (the site previously designated for the observatory), is an undistinguished example of postwar architecture, lacking the romance and verve of the Cram and Ferguson proposals. Still, its footprint would have made a better north edge for the quad than the fragmented DuPont Science Building, which was eventually built on that site in 1960. As was done with Willets, architect Vincent Kling based DuPont on principles of modern architecture. Its asymmetry, interrelationship of interior and exterior space, and low horizontal pavilions make it a memorable building.

The 1946 library proposal also has little architectural presence. Fortunately by the time McCabe Library was built in 1968, this tedious late phase of moderne was over. The final form of McCabe Library was much simpler—and twice as high. Though the great mass of the building has never been completely comfortable in relation to other buildings on campus, at least Vincent Kling had the sensitivity to use local stone and took great advantage of the inspiring views from that altitude. Any future expansion of McCabe will require sensitive thinking about the impact of more volume of building concentrated in this highly visible area.
Thanks in part to attorney Ellen Barry ’75, a stroke victim will receive medical treatment, a pregnant woman won’t be abused, and a few mothers will get to see their kids. What makes any of this unusual is that the women involved are all in prison. For her two decades of work for prisoners like these—and many others—Barry has a $275,000 MacArthur Fellowship, placing her with Rebecca Nelson ’82 as one of Swarthmore’s two “genius award” winners this year.

Barry is the founder and director of Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC). Based in San Francisco, LSPC is a nationally known advocacy organization that works to get prisoners decent medical care, helps their children and relatives, and fights for sentencing alternatives for mothers. Barry also helped launch the National Network for Women in Prison, an organization that has sponsored a series of national roundtables devoted to the plight of incarcerated women and their children.

She first came up with the idea of an advocacy group for incarcerated parents and their children in 1978, when she was fresh out of law school. Since then, LSPC has become a high-profile operation. In addition to advocacy and support, it has filed a number of significant class-action lawsuits on behalf of prisoners and their families.

In Rios v. Roland, LSPC forced the California Department of Corrections to implement a program that lets low-security women prisoners live with their children in halfway houses. “It took me two years of fighting to get into a halfway house so I could be with my baby,” said a plaintiff in the case. “What [LSPC] did for me and my family was almost beyond words. They let me be a mother to my children, to keep the bond, so we could rebuild our lives.”

In Jones v. Dyer and Yeager v. Smith, LSPC required two California counties to provide adequate medical care and make drug treatment available to pregnant prisoners. Said a plaintiff in Jones: “When I was in jail I kept thinking, ‘Me and my baby might make it out of here alive, and we might not.’ I wasn’t born with a silver spoon. I’ve gotten pushed around a
lot. But when my baby died, I'd had enough.”

And in 1995, in collaboration with a group of other public interest lawyers, LSPC filed Shumate v. Wilson on behalf of women in California prisons who have been systematically denied medical treatment. The plaintiffs, incarcerated women with cancer, heart disease, sickle cell anemia, AIDS, and tuberculosis, claim that the prisons’ inadequate medical care has caused needless pain, suffering, and premature death.

It’s no accident that Barry can relate to women in jail; she sees herself as a street fighter who learned about life the hard way. “I was the oldest daughter of 10 kids in a working-class Irish-Catholic family in Somerville, Massachusetts,” she says. “And my family saw a great deal of alcohol and drug addiction.” A series of scholarships got Barry out of Somerville, first to an academic girls’ high school and then—on a friend’s recommendation—to Swarthmore.

It turned out to be a perfect fit. “Swarthmore was a haven,” says Barry. “It was a bit of a fishbowl, but the family-like environment suited me—and it was as far from Somerville as I could get.” Despite “huge differences” in backgrounds between her and her fellow students, Barry says being at the College—where she helped create the Women’s Center—was a wonderful educational opportunity.

Her political consciousness was greatly influenced by Professor Ken Sharpe, whose course on Latin American politics she says was instrumental in her later visiting Chile to work with the families of political prisoners of the Pinochet regime. And she made lifelong friends in Professor Ken Gergen and his wife, Mary.

Gergen, who teaches social psychology, calls Barry one of the most memorable students he has ever known. “She was wonderfully articulate, quick of mind, strong in her sentiments, thoughtful and committed in her politics, and her energies were without end.” He adds: “She was also willing to take risks socially, politically, and intellectually. I often saw in her the spirit of a young Irish rebel. If there was oppression of any kind—whether in terms of social conven-

People assume that prisoners are little Charlie Mansons walking around. And it just isn’t true. I’m not saying they’re Virgin Marys, but I challenge the notion that this is a whole class of people that should be written off and locked away.”

—Ellen Barry ’75

In more than the usual sense, Barry’s work is a labor of love. “Working with prisoners is among the most marginalized and least popular things you can do,” she says, “but for me, it’s been enormously fulfilling.” She recognizes that LSPC’s clients are people others would rather forget about. “But my core belief is that people will respond positively and compassionately to the kind of situations we talk about.” Barry is convinced people can come to see that pregnant women shouldn’t be locked up in prisons that don’t give them adequate medical care, “or that women with drug dependency problems aren’t monsters with horns on their heads but, in fact, are struggling to deal with their addiction and to be good mothers.”

“There is a great deal of misinformation, and a lot of it is generalized about a handful of violent or psychot-

SEPTEMBER 1998
Some people are known by their enemies, and Rebecca Nelson ’82 has a killer. Nelson is a plant pathologist in Peru, and her special foe is a potato disease called late blight. “It’s the most horrific plant pathogen of all time,” she says grimly. “Late blight has the title of the worst crop disease in the world.”

That’s no exaggeration. When late blight (Phytophthora infestans) destroyed potato crops in Ireland in the 1840s and 1850s, more than a million people starved to death. The fungus is remarkably destructive, devastating apparently healthy potato fields within days. Today, new pesticide-resistant strains have appeared, and the disease has become a global threat to potato production in rich and poor countries alike. As Nelson puts it in her best mock-desperado accent, “It’s back, and it’s badder than ever.”

Nelson, who earned a Ph.D. at the University of Washington after graduating from Swarthmore, is a molecular biologist who has been looking for ways to prevent crop losses from plant diseases in developing countries, first with rice in Vietnam and the Philippines and now with potatoes in Latin America and Africa.

For the last two years, she has headed late-blight research at the International Potato Center (CIP) in Lima, where she lives with her husband, freelance writer and NPR reporter Jonathan Miller ’85, and their two sons, ages 5 and 7. Nelson also is an editor of Theoretical and Applied Genetics and an associate editor of Phytopathology.

And, in recognition of her work, Nelson in June was awarded a $240,000 MacArthur Fellowship.

Nelson is a bit of a clown, something Scott Gilbert, her developmental biology professor, remembers well. “She was brilliant and fun loving, socially concerned, and very intellectual,” he says. Gilbert recalls that Nelson and about 20 other students once showed up at a Halloween party dressed as a human “complement cascade,” which is a series of protein interactions that are involved in destroying bacteria. (The curious can also see a snapshot of Nelson and Dana Lyons ’81 wearing tadpole models at www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/Biology/alumni.html.) Kidding aside, Gilbert is delighted with Nelson and her success. “I think it’s fantastic to use one’s scientific talents in a field such as plant pathology,” he says, “It’s exactly how Swarthmore students can use science for socially useful projects.”

“I’m really doing what I was cut out to do,” says Nelson. “Since I was a kid, I’ve wanted to be a biologist. I relish doing biology, but it had to be useful—such as working on food production for people who need it.” She was almost sidetracked in graduate school, however, where she found herself studying molecular genetics of fruit flies on her way to a doctorate in zoology. “But I found it annoying that these people were sitting around talking about fruit flies all the time,” she
“I wondered, ‘Why are they doing this? Don’t they realize that there’s a world out there with 700 million hungry people in it?’”

In 1988, with a newly minted Ph.D. in her pocket, Nelson set out to do something about it. Though she admits she didn’t know much about plant pathology, she landed a job studying rice diseases with the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines. There she became convinced that managing plant diseases required more than just lab work. While maintaining an active molecular research program, she linked up with the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization to teach Vietnamese farmers the fundamentals of disease prevention, helping them reduce their use of pesticides in the process.

“When you’re dealing with something as complicated as developing-country agriculture, you don’t go looking for silver bullets,” says Nelson. “The world is incredibly diverse, and pathogens reflect that diversity. The farmers are in the best position to know what’s going on in their own fields. They just need some basic information and some good materials to work with.”

After eight years in Asia, in 1996 Nelson moved her family to Lima. Peru is the ancestral home of the potato—more than 200 varieties have been identified there—as well as many other useful roots and tubers. Peru also is rich in agro-ecologies. “We have high mountains, rain forest, desert, and lots in between,” she says. “It’s a living biodiversity laboratory.”

Nelson’s work lets her wear two uniforms—sometimes a lab coat, sometimes a rain coat. “I run a molecular genetics lab here in Lima,” she says, “where we’re trying to understand the genetic basis of disease resistance and how pathogen populations adapt to it. But I also get to visit farming communities to see what we can do to help potato farmers in the here and now.” As in Asia, Nelson has helped set up pilot “farmer field schools” in the central Andes, in which small-scale potato growers learn disease management techniques and test promising new potato varieties.

When she first heard she had won the MacArthur award, Nelson briefly imagined moving up the world—and buying the farm. Lima is in a coastal desert, so the CIP runs a highlands research station and a late blight experimental site near Huancayo, an Andean town at about 11,000 feet above sea level. Nelson immediately thought Huancayo would be the place to turn the MacArthur money into mud. “An old hacienda was for sale,” she says, “and I thought if we got some land in the highlands, we would hang out there for fun and maybe spend more time doing our experiments, which we had been neglecting.”

So where does the mud come into the story? “Adobe is something I obsess about as I go around the Andes,” says Nelson. “It’s a great material; I’d love to build something with it.” (Nelson cheerfully ignores the fact that El Niño rains have been melting Peruvian hillsides faster than late blight melts potatoes.) “And it would be beautiful to have a toehold in the Andes instead of whizzing in and out from time to time.”

Alas, Nelson’s family life soon popped that balloon. “I noticed that for the next 14 weekends, between my husband’s softball and my sons’ soccer, we had an average of 2.5 ball games per weekend,” says Nelson. “There went the hope for an adobe farmhouse. We could never get out of town!”

Not that life in Lima is all that bad. “I’m very happy,” she says. “I have a great family and a career in international agriculture research that I love. I find it gut-level satisfying in a way I couldn’t find working in the United States.”

In the States, she says, large-scale farms spray huge amounts of pesticides on the few preferred potato varieties. People aren’t interested in adopting new varieties that are resistant to late blight. Fungicides are cheap, and the market dictates what is grown. “McDonald’s just wants Russet Burbank,” says Nelson. “American farmers will tell you, ‘Fungicides are working fine, thank you. They’re cheap, and I can sleep in my tractor while I’m spraying the hell out of the place. There’s overproduction, and nobody is starving. It’s hard for me to care very much about that sort of situation.’”

For Nelson, adding to American carbo-glut pales beside sharing knowledge with Third World farmers. “Scientists at my institute have been breeding resistant types of potatoes for 20 years,” she says. “We’re daggin’ away at it because the farmers here are interested,” she says. “There’s not much slack in their system. They’re motivated, and that motivation rubs off on me.”

Nelson would love to see farmers dispense with chemicals, but managing late blight inevitably involves the use of fungicides. She found in Vietnam that with rice she could easily do without chemicals. “Between nutrient management, varietal diversification, and something as simple as plant density—seedling rate—you can cope with rice diseases,” she says. “But in the case of late blight, I don’t know anybody who reckons they can really get by without any fungicides at all.”

Nelson says that her Swarthmore education encouraged her to value both the study of nature and the impulse to improve the world in palpable ways. “I feel very lucky to have a chance to make good on those values,” she says. “And you can’t beat the scenery.”

William Rodarmor is a French translator and the deputy editor of the UC-Berkeley alumni magazine.
By Leo Braudy '63

As a student in the early 1960s, I was acutely aware of a boundary between the “official” Swarthmore education and the “unofficial.” Official Swarthmore, found largely in the classroom, was characterized by an often single-minded emphasis on intellect and the life of the mind. Unofficial Swarthmore included almost everything else: the Friday and Saturday night movies, where in the course of a semester or two you could take a short course in the history of film; late-night folksinging; the early civil rights movement; Quaker meeting; and, of course, all of our friends and acquaintances—the overwhelming importance of other people, their ideas, their personalities, and their ways of dealing with the world.

The unofficial Swarthmore nurtured the affective, spiritual side of life in a way that classes never could—and, at the time at least, weren’t meant to. This was the amateur life rather than the professional, the emotional rather than the intellectual. These were the nourishing moments when you could learn something that was not taught by a professor. Official Swarthmore was the culture of the past, safely contained in disciplinary boxes; unofficial Swarthmore was the culture of immediacy: how we define ourselves—and continue to redefine ourselves—in our own times.

Matthew Arnold defined culture as “the best that has been thought or said,” but my interest—which 30 years ago made no blip at all on the radar of “serious” academics—has included all the variety of what people have felt and believed as part of their daily definitions of themselves. My writing and teaching have explored the need for empathy with the irrational element in human behavior and desire—demands that the classically educated mind couldn’t quite serve.

Yet as one of those who brought the study of film and popular culture into the university, I wonder what has happened to those nourishing moments when you could learn something that was not taught in class? In a world where classes can reasonably be devoted to the study of horror films, popular music, and girl gangs, what is unofficial any longer? I’m not putting such courses down; I teach some of them myself. But I also often ask my students what they read for pleasure. Is it anything like what we passed around—Catcher in the Rye, Siddhartha? No, it usually turns out to be Stephen King and Anne Rice or other variations of mainstream popular culture. The line between the mainstream and the underground has become almost invisible, so that in today’s mass music market, even the most “outsider” band still gets to be produced by some arm of Time Warner.

One of my students summed up the situation neatly: “I have to read so much popular cultural material in my classes,” he said, “that when I want to relax, I read Milton.”

Part of the reason for the rise of popular culture as a subject of both public and academic scrutiny has been the voracity with which America in the last 30 years has turned private nature and a large chunk of private space into public consumption—all in the name of what the media usually call the public’s need to know.

The preoccupation with fame is only the most obvious version of this voracity. The media are no longer what their name implies: intermediaries between events and audiences. A metamedia has come into being, committed to, imprisoned by, and frequently bored to death by its own preoccupation with fame.
We didn’t invent fame, but we have been almost swallowed up by its insistent presence and by its paraphernalia. In the ancient world, fame was a way of honoring what aspired to be permanent in human action and thought—of preserving it beyond death and all of life’s accidents. In our century the word has come to be randomly applied to everything from truly significant events and people to the most fleeting blur in the public eye.

As the millennium approaches, the incessant media mapping of public celebrations and public burnings seems to signal a desperate search for signposts of authority in a constantly shifting landscape. We are constantly asking—and being asked—what does this “famous” event or “famous” person say about who “we” as a nation and culture are right now? Always the question is posed in terms of specific events and individuals. But the real curiosity is about the processes of fame and the media’s role in them: How do you get it? How do you keep it? How do you lose it? Why are we so fascinated by famous people?

Particularly in the United States, this nation of many different people all calling themselves American, talk of fame is one of the few conversations that joins rather than separates us. As the world grows more complex, human faces are plastered on every idea and event. Each news story must begin with a personal anecdote, and complex phenomena wear the reduced features of emblematic individuals: Bill Gates stands for the computer revolution, C. Everett Koop stands for health care, and O.J. Simpson—depending on your point of view—stands for spousal abuse, racial prejudice, or the flaws in the criminal justice system.

Similarly, the word “superstar,” the 1970s and 1980s designation for a greater than ordinary fame, has been replaced by the formerly sacred word “icon.” Here are a few recent examples: Joan Didion and Edgar Allan Poe are literary icons, Albert Einstein is a physics icon, Courtney Love is a “modern fashion icon,” and breasts—at least female ones—are “a cultural icon in U.S. society.” Icon status is also not limited to human beings or parts of the human body. I’ve read that Wal-Mart is a retail icon, that Van Gogh’s sunflowers are “icons of expressionism,” and that the United States is no longer, in the eyes of some jaundiced Russians, an icon of democracy. My recent favorite appeared in an obituary in the Los Angeles Times, where the late Barry Goldwater was referred to as a “trailblazing icon.”

Like the computer icon and the holy icon, the fame icon claims to be the path to a world of larger meaning. But by now, when life has become crammed with the paraphernalia of visual immediacy, posterity—which used to be the place where true fame was judged—has become shrunken and attenuated.

Meanwhile fame has become its own subject matter. Magazines write glibly of the problems facing new names in the fame firmament, stalkers are analyzed in the daily press, and talking heads (including sometimes my own) instantly dissect any situation involving the famous for its spine of cultural meaning. Awareness of the element of fame and publicity extends into every kind of subject matter. Perhaps a high water mark was reached a little over a year ago, when more than half of the articles in one Sunday’s News of the...
Week in Review section of *The New York Times* dealt with events and issues that were predicated on the fame of those involved: the relation between criminal trials and civil trials (O.J. Simpson); the Jewish heritage of Madeleine Albright (how common was conversion because of the Holocaust?); the immodesty of various sports stars and politicians (is it a trend?); the effect of television on Serbian politics (the president failed to control it); and the belief that formerly famous people are dead (the conclusion was they may as well be).

Why is this considered to be valid commentary on the news? One is that, for both journalist and audience, to be aware of fame is to be knowing and behind the scenes, in control of information rather than being controlled. Your particular knowingness may be gossip about politicians and movie stars, advance reports about the newest fashion trends, secret proof of the existence of aliens, or apocalyptic paranoia about the government, the United Nations, or just plain arrogance—because they mistakenly took their fame to be their own rather than a gift of the audience.

**There are two fame stories the public especially likes to hear.**

*In one the triumph occurs only after the surmounting of overwhelming personal difficulties. The second is a story of retribution in which heroes or heroines fall, destroyed by fate, or chance, or just plain arrogance—because they mistakenly took their fame to be their own rather than a gift of the audience.*

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Although the urge to fame originally was the aspiration for a life after death in the words and thoughts of the community, it has thus evolved over the centuries into the desire for fame in one’s own lifetime.

In the early 20th century, the gossip about how movie stars had been renamed by studios (or had renamed themselves) reflected the immigrant ideal of a new life in America, where the future was wholly open because the past could be forgotten. Now, the story behind celebrity of all sorts has been conceived as a revelation of shattered family histories and personal psychological damage. Among the hopeful the desire for media attention, therefore, drifts easily into the belief that it will be a healing compensation for whatever faults and fissures there are in the sense of self. We might call it telepathology—a wound to the self that can be remedied only by being on television.

Yet underneath the grins of pleasure at being on stage runs a fear that this fleeting fame is actually a consolation prize for failing in life. Instead of curing problems with the balm of attention, it more often makes them worse. Recently, a young man came on a television talk show, believing that he would meet a secret admirer. He did, although it turned out that the admirer was not the woman he hoped but another man. Three days later, he bought a gun and murdered the unwanted fan, then called 911 and said he had done this because he had been humiliated on television.

John Keats wanted engraved on his tombstone “here lies one whose name was writ on water” because he thought the true goal of the poet’s work was to become part of the language. Even Lord Byron, for all his courting of publicity, finally fled England to give his life—and his fame—for the cause of Greek freedom.

Now, of course, the emblematic desire is to be on television, to have your picture in the papers, and to admire those who have—not for what they have done but for how they’re seen. By the standards of contemporary fame, to call a person famous whose face is unfamiliar seems virtually incomprehensible. Not too long ago there appeared a cartoon in *The New Yorker* that summed up the paradox with admirable clarity. In it a nondescript man on the street is being singled out by a gigantic pointing finger of God emerging from a cloud. The caption reads: “You will never be on television.”
Leo Braudy ’63: Pioneering the study of popular culture

When Leo Braudy ’63 spoke at Alumni Collection on Alumni Weekend 1998, he remembered being “hauled with my roommates on the carpet by Dean [W.C.H.] Prentice, who wanted to know what nefarious things were going on down at Roberts.”

Ironically, one of those roommates, Bob Gross ’63, was recently appointed dean of the College. “Even after 35 years,” smiled Braudy, “it—and I don’t know what it is: self-justification, revenge, poetic justice, or just a nice symmetrical story—it still seems sweet.”

Braudy, who is the Leo S. Bing Professor of English at the University of Southern California, majored in English at Swarthmore but says he had just as many credits in history. This, he said, accounts for his interest in a historical view of literature as well as a literary view of history. Braudy is the author of five books on literature, film, and popular culture, including the groundbreaking 1986 study, The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History.

The book, which was reissued in 1997 by Vintage Press, explores the process of achieving fame and the meaning of fame in various societies, from Alexander the Great to Madonna. The Frenzy of Renown has made Braudy a frequent commentator on popular culture: “Hardly a week goes by that I’m not called on the phone by a reporter eager for a ‘serious’ perspective on whether Nadia Comaneci will be able to regain the fame she had as a teenage gymnast, whether the fame of her grandfather pushed Margaux Hemingway to suicide, whether scandals would hurt one movie star’s career and help another’s, why paparazzi care about taking photos of the famous, why otherwise normal people want to sleep in houses where famous murders occurred or films were made, why some tourists visiting Israel are temporarily swept away by the belief they are actually Samson or the Virgin Mary—the list is endless.”

Braudy is among the pioneers of the study of popular culture in academia, yet he said that “most of the teaching and writing I’ve done owes little directly to what I learned in class at Swarthmore—or, for that matter, in graduate school.... Was this entirely a bad thing? Do I wish that I had gone to a larger university and few in any depth.

There are two fame stories the public especially likes to hear. In one the triumph occurs only after the surmounting of overwhelming personal difficulties. Then, after fame is achieved, the second story appears. It is a story of retribution and revenge in which heroes or heroines fall, destroyed by fate, or chance, or just plain arrogance—because they mistakenly took their fame to be their own rather than a gift of the audience. The same audience that celebrated the rise gloats over the fall.

To speak frankly and directly about social problems, to expose wrongs that festered because they were unspoken, to expose to the air of difficult discussion issues too long ignored—this is the positive side of the
What has too often been substituted for a civic and civil sense of contemporary society is a handful of symbols and media celebrities. Such fame has nothing to do with the memory of significant achievement beyond its use in trivia quizzes.

In their bland assumption of the virtues of publicity, the media willfully ignore this ferocious, even vengeful, aspect of paying attention: the double life of the audience who applauds and the audience who reviles. The weakness of the private self becomes the way to attack the oppressive public image in a virtual parody of the democratic leveling of all distinction. The story of aspiration has turned into a cautionary tale, and every fan becomes a stalker, bent on showing his worship by breaking down the distance between him and the object of his adoration. Then, of course, we complain that there are no more heroes.

What has too often been substituted for a civic and civil sense of contemporary society is a handful of symbols and media celebrities. Such fame has nothing to do with the memory of significant achievement beyond its use in future trivia quizzes. But it still pretends to wear the crown of the fame of the past. There are two worlds now: the media world and all the momentarily grand things that happen in it and the world of normality, which seems constantly shrinking in significance. Yet a fame without history is a fame without memory as well, and anyone who knows history knows that few famous in the contemporary moment will be remembered.

Perhaps some change is in the air. A recent Roper poll concluded that although three out of four Americans thought that scientific and technological discoveries got too little attention, nine out of 10 thought that sports and entertainment figures got too much. At the very least, there should be a moratorium on the casual use of the word “famous”—just as Vladimir Nabokov believed “reality” should never be written without quotation marks.

I realize that in the course of this essay, I’ve inexorably assumed the writer’s privilege of generalizing his or her own experience as the key to the experiences of the reader. Perhaps it’s appropriate. In eras when general truths are buried too deeply to find or understand, we turn to the personal as a dowsing rod, and it seems almost obligatory these days to brandish one’s personal history as reason enough to delve into a subject and to make that history the armature of general truth.

To the extent that such gestures have taken us away from the impersonal voice of authority, fine. Any subject worth investigating, any story worth telling, can’t be exhausted by one version. But too often the personal substitutes for the general, when it should be at best a path to it.

I often feel a rush of thankfulness when I read the obituaries of people who led exemplary lives and made exemplary contributions to society but were hardly ever in the news. So I guess that underneath it all, I did absorb something from Swarthmore about the virtues and vitality of community. Over the years the openness, curiosity, and intellectual self-consciousness cultivated by the whole Swarthmore experience had the nicely paradoxical effect of enabling me to stand back from my own detachment as well and try to see analysis and emotion, intellect and spirituality, not as polar opposites but as part of a continuum.

As products of Swarthmore, we are all, I think, exposed directly or by osmosis to the idea of the inner light, which links the individual to values, both spiritual and secular, beyond the narrowly personal—the inner light, you might say, tempered by the sense of community. I hope that as a culture we can similarly get away from the assumption not only that the public eye authenticates value but also that it ought to. Otherwise the best of democratic fame—the opportunity for each of us to be recognized for what is valuable to all—will become the most petty, and the source of honor and praise will be turned into just another excuse for a T-shirt.

This essay was adapted from Leo Braudy’s Alumni Collection speech on Alumni Weekend 1998. The speech itself was adapted in part from the afterword to the second edition of The Frenzy of Renown (Random House 1997). The full text of the speech can be found at http://www.swarthmore.edu/Home/Alumni/reunion/1963/speech.html.
Upcoming Events

London, England: Swarthmoreans will gather for drinks at the Orangery in Holland Park on Thursday, October 29, convened by Ingeborg Daniels ’93 and Erik Rehl ’94.

Philadelphia: Alan Symonette ’76 will lead a Swarthmore contingent at the 11th annual Philadelphia AIDS Walk on Sunday, October 18. The Connection travels to the Cape May Bird Observatory with George Stein ’67 on Saturday, October 24.

San Francisco: President and Mrs. Alfred H. Bloom will welcome alumni, parents, and friends to a “Conversation With the President,” arranged by John Goldman ’71, at the Concordia-Argonaut Club on Wednesday, October 14.

Recent Events

Chicago: Connection veteran Marilee Roberg ’73 has assumed the role of chair, and she is working with fellow alumni to make plans for a schedule of activities in 1999.

Houston: Ray and Marsha Floyd hosted a party at their home to send off new Swarthmore students, including their daughter, Allison ’02.


Philadelphia: Football alumni joined Tim Malarkey ’89, new head coach Pete Alvanos, and the Swarthmore football team for an end-of-summer scrimmage game and cookout on campus.

Seattle: Swarthmore hikers visited Washington’s largest land swamp to learn about the hazards of swapping land for new highways, organized by Deb Read ’87.

Tri-Cities, N.C.: An annual potluck picnic in suburban Raleigh celebrated the departure of new students for Swarthmore. Priscilla Coit Murphy ’67 completed her term as Connection chair and welcomed George Telford ’84 as her successor.

Regional Swarthmore events are run by volunteers. If you would like to organize an event in your area, please contact Katie Bowman ’94, assistant director of alumni relations, at kbowman1@swarthmore.edu or (610) 328-8404.
Letters

Allow me a metaphorical tribute that borrows from another great commentator I encountered at Swarthmore—Joseph Conrad, author of *Youth*:

But you here—you all had something out of life: money, love—whatever one gets on shore—and, tell me, wasn’t that the best time, that time when we were young at sea; young and had nothing, on the sea that gives nothing, except hard knocks—and sometimes a chance to feel your strength.

Matt Lorenz ’81
St. Petersburg, Fla.

Life-changing teaching
To the Editor:
Congratulations on an excellent article about Richie Schuldenfrei. As a teacher at a teaching college, I know that it is life-changing teaching that really matters to students more than anything else we do. Richie is my model for a teacher who sees that as the main goal. It is appropriate for Swarthmore to honor its great teachers with recognition among the alumni—the audience that cares the most and the one that ultimately matters the most.

Beau Weston ’82
Danville, Ky.

“What Richie did, and has apparently kept doing all these years, is instill the basic notion that ideas matter—that there is a connection between words and action.”

Ideas matter
To the Editor:
Vicki Glembocki’s article on Richie Schuldenfrei brought back more than memories for me—it conjured up powerful feelings about my years at Swarthmore. Richie and Thompson Bradley worked with me and a group of students in 1973 and 1974 to apply political and philosophical concepts to real-world events. We struggled with Kant, Marx, and Hegel to find guidance for our actions.

Richie and Tom helped us establish a political left that renounced violence as a means to the desired ends. We put out a little newsletter called *Critical Times* (not the typical Swarthmoorean double meaning) and summoned up the nerve to pass it out to workers in Philadelphia. And despite these diversions, all of us managed to graduate.

What Richie did, and has apparently kept doing all these years, is instill the basic notion that ideas matter—that there is a connection between words and action. Like Richie’s, my political and philosophical leanings have evolved over the years. Less an agitator than a peacemaker, I now work as a mediator of labor-management disputes. I still consider Richie (and Tom) as my greatest influences at Swarthmore. I am delighted that his lifelong contributions are being recognized.

Paul D. Roose ’74
Oakland, Calif.

Disappointed ... but challenged to think
To the Editor:
I was a student at Swarthmore during the period when Richie Schuldenfrei moved toward an “explicit Marxism.” Richie grappled with Marxism just as he engaged all other vital intellectual traditions: He challenged Marxism’s basic ideas, he questioned its prescriptions for action, and he demanded clarity and consistency from its concepts. His struggle to understand Marxism in a critical, nondogmatic way had a tremendous impact on my political and intellectual development.

Several years after I graduated, I learned that Richie had decided that Marxism was, in some fundamental sense, complicit with the Gulag and with the horrors of Pol Pot. I was at the time and remain today disappointed by his shift from radical politics to “traditional” values. I continue to view Marxism not as a set of dogmatic truths but as a powerful intellectual tool for social analysis as well as a vision of a humanistic and democratic society. This notion of Marxism is not only inconsistent with the dictatorships and death camps of the Stalinist regimes but recognizes that the means and the ends of political activity are integrally connected.

As a labor activist for 25 years, I wish that Richie had not rejected the notion of radical social change. Yet this letter is not meant to criticize Richie for his “betrayal” of the cause. Whatever his views about society and religion, the fact that Richie continues to challenge his students to think critically about the world and to live in accord with a set of principles is, in my view, far more important than his particular beliefs. I hope that Swarthmore students have the opportunity to engage in dialogue with Richie Schuldenfrei for many years to come.

Mike Slott ’75
Montclair, N.J.

I never wrote nor do I believe that the Gospel Choir is “just singing,” nor did I make the absurd claim that minorities are creating the “race problem.”

Culture is for communication
To the Editor:
Consider the words “Jim Crow,” “lynching,” “apartheid,” “ethnic cleansing,” “ghetto,” “Aryan supremacy,” and “genocide.” Their mere mention reminds us that the urge to ostracize the “other” is perhaps the most prevalent source of contemporary evil.

Thus, when I learned that Swarthmore sponsors and funds groups that bar students of a different skin color or language background, I sent e-mail messages and a letter to the *Bulletin* to question and, ultimately, to protest. These were my first communications with the College other than routine alumni matters since graduation.

The groups involved, such as the Gospel Choir, are about culture—and to me culture is for communication, not segregation.

I anticipated disagreement. After all, similar policies exist in many other colleges—although not universally. For example, both my children belong to on-campus Jewish groups, but in both cases non-Jews are welcome.

But I didn’t anticipate the fantasy and race baiting of W.T. Boykin Jr. ’77 printed in the June *Bulletin* under the headline “Whites want exclusivity only for themselves.” It’s hard to imagine a...
more false and racist message, both in the headline and letter.

I never wrote nor do I believe that the Gospel Choir is “just singing,” nor did I make the absurd claim that minorities are creating the “race problem.” Mr. Boykin’s quotations were merely fabricated. I never advocated that nonwhites be excluded from professional and social organizations of “white America.” (In most cases it probably is, and certainly should be, illegal to bar nonwhites, however defined, from any professional organizations and from social organizations supported directly or indirectly by public funds.) I never said, nor do I believe, that “St. Patrick’s Day ... or Italian-American day” should be treated differently from celebrations of black or Hispanic ethnic backgrounds.

I never said and certainly don’t believe that “nonwhite ethnic or cultural backgrounds” should not be valued on the same level.

I merely questioned whether racial and ethnic exclusion—tools of the hate mongers—are appropriate for a small, elite liberal arts college. So far to me the answer is in the negative. Mr. Boykin’s letter reinforces my conclusion.

Sigmund “Pete” Beck ’57
Greenwich, Conn.

Some of the seniors, who had acute cases of senioritis, were shamed into better performances because of the high standards set by the younger students.

The “peer effect”

To the Editor:

In your article “Why Can’t a College Be More Like a Business?” (June 1998), you quoted Professor of Biology Mark Jacobs on the “peer effect” at Swarthmore: “Swarthmore students set high standards for each other.... The pressure to do well is coming not from the professors as much as from the other students.” He goes on to say that juniors and seniors pass along their “expectations for excellence” to younger students.

This reminds me of a converse story. I was teaching microbiology one spring and had four first-year students sign up to take it. These were students who had placed out of general biology with high Advanced Placement scores. I let them in the class and gave them extra tutorial sessions on writing because our upper-class students had been taught basic science writing skills in the general biology sequence.

I worried needlessly; these first-year students did exceptionally well. In fact some of the seniors, who had acute cases of senioritis, were shamed into better performances because of the high standards set by the younger students. I won’t soon forget the acknowledgment that one senior wrote in his final paper: “Special thanks to the super freshman foursome, who shamed the likes of me into doing my very best, just to keep up with them. I know that I leave the College in their able hands.”

Amy Cheng Vollmer
Associate Professor of Biology

Fraught with what?

To the Editor:

I am becoming unhappily used to seeing the word “fraught” used as a single adjective in less intellectually oriented publications, such as Newsweek. But I was appalled to find a Swarthmore professor, Joy Charlton, commit the same error in the June Bulletin (“A year in the Dean’s Office: an ethnographic experience”):

“Our students make this transition in an environment that is, in some ways, benign and protected (as parents hope) but is also fraught and pressure filled (as students fear).”

My dictionary defines “fraught” as “laden, freighted, attended, accompanied.” So the Swarthmore environment is laden, freighted, attended, accompanied—but by what?

Although Swarthmore professors and students soar to ever-greater intellectual heights, let them not ignore the humbler virtues of correct English usage.

Louise Zimmerman Forscher ’44
Exeter, N.H.

Almost 20 years, actually

Dear Editors:

Sigh. Has it been so long that you’ve forgotten what we looked like? It seems like only yesterday that the editors of the 1979 Halcyon posed under the sign at the Swarthmore train station for the picture on page 29 of the June 1998 Bulletin. You can find the original on page 210 of the 1979 yearbook.

Bob McLaughlin ’79 is in back, Liz Burchard ’82 is in the center, Sarah Humphrey DeCamello ’79 is to the right of Liz, and I’m on the left of Liz.

It brought back a lot of good memories of that year putting together the yearbook. We worked very well together and had a great Swarthmore experience. In fact I had such a good time I went on to work for several different publishing companies. I’m glad you found the picture, and it didn’t end up in the ashes of Tarble after the fire.

Pamela Juram Kuhn ’79
Lake Bluff, Ill.

Editor’s Note: Pam Juram Kuhn was editor of the 1979 Halcyon. Also chiming in with IDs for the photo above—and not always getting them right—were fellow editor Sarah Humphrey DeCamello ’79, class president Andy Schultz, and six other ’79ers: John and Carol Shapley Eiter, Peter Koelle, Tobee Phipps, Bob Rakita, and Martha Kane Savage. Thanks for writing!

Letters to the Bulletin

The Bulletin welcomes letters concerning the contents of the magazine or issues relating to the College. All letters must be signed and may be edited for clarity and space. Address your letters to: Editor, Swarthmore College Bulletin, 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore PA 19081-1397, or send by e-mail to bulletin@swarthmore.edu.
Heywood Hale Broun ’40 has lived a “patternless existence” many would envy.

A student, Heywood Hale Broun ’40 saw nothing odd about simultaneously managing the football team and serving as secretary of the theater club. But a schoolmate direly predicted “a patternless existence that would lead to identity crises and regrets,” and urged him to focus on one interest or the other.

Broun further confounded stereotypes as a vice president of Delta Upsilon who was also president of the left-wing American Student Union. In addition, he wrote for The Phoenix, chaired the Men’s Conduct Committee, performed in the student-faculty play, and started a badminton team.

Half a century later, when Swarthmore awarded him an honorary doctorate, “Woodie” Broun could celebrate a “patternless existence” that many would envy. In thanking Vice President Kendall Landis ’48 for the citation, he observed that it “seems to put a framework around a career which the carping [observer] might describe as sprawling.” But only the carping; others would call it a dazzling model of vocational variety.

Broun may be best known for his 19 years at CBS-TV, where no Kentucky Derby broadcast was complete without Woodie at the rail, dispensing sharp observations in rococo phrases, wearing one of his wild sportcoats. (He still carries a photo of Secretariat in his wallet.) And he brought brains and enthusiasm to baseball—“DiMaggio is still on a pedestal for me”—and other sports from rugby to ice fishing.

But he also produced jazz records of black virtuosos in New Orleans, worked on the experimental national newspaper called PM, survived blacklisting in the 1950s, performed in 14 Broadway plays, acted in TV soap operas, and wrote a novel—“trash.” He doesn’t own a VCR because he’s afraid he’d spend all his time watching movies.

“Woodie” Broun was the only student with a bookie and the only one to take Professor Philip Hicks to the races. Yet despite this rakish persona, he graduated with Honors and a Phi Beta Kappa key that he wears to this day.

Broun’s beloved wife, actress Jane Lloyd-Jones, died in 1991. Their son, Heywood Oren “Hob” Broun, a promising novelist, died four years earlier. Alone in Woodstock, he’s “made up a structure. I get up, feed the two cats, read the paper, read the mail, watch some soap operas, read a ‘downstairs’ book—something serious—and later the ‘upstairs’ book—trash.” He doesn’t have an answering machine because he’s afraid he’d spend all his time answering letters.

Every Tuesday he visits his Manhattan apartment overlooking the Hayden Planetarium. He accepts one “job” a month, like a book review for The Washington Post, offering insights on HBO’s recent documentary on Babe Ruth, or helping the Algonquin reopen its dining room by reading a Dorothy Parker poem about his father. He owns shares in five race horses, and there are 10 winner’s circle pictures at home in Woodstock.

In 1989 Broun was emcee for the 50th-anniversary celebration of Swarthmore’s first undefeated football team, with the late coach Lew Elverson as guest of honor. And he likes to visit fellow alumni in England and Ireland, although his own roots are Scottish. “The Brouns lived 800 years in the same town,” he said. “They came with William the Conqueror’s wife, and they never accomplished a thing. My grandfather emigrated and won a billiards tournament. It was the first Broun accomplishment.” But clearly not the last.

—Barbara Haddad Ryan ’59
A seminar on small family farms—Janet Arentson, a small-scale farmer at the San Diego Wild Animal Park and was interested in encouraging private people to become involved in raising exotic animals both domestic and wild was circuitous. After graduating from Swarthmore with a major in psychology, she moved to Berkeley, Calif., to pursue a certificate in elementary education and become a preschool teacher. Following a personal struggle with alcohol, in 1978 she entered Seattle University and earned a diploma in alcohol studies. Then, moving back east to Blue Hill, Maine, she opened a drug and alcohol clinic at the local hospital. Two years later she returned to California, where she married David, a film editor in Los Angeles.

So, whence the exotic pets? In 1982 the Holdens decided to flee urban life but needed to be within striking distance of the city to accommodate David’s career. They selected a piece of property in Los Alamos that was part of an agricultural preserve, which meant it had to be used for agricultural purposes. After 15 years of “parenting” exotic animals, the Holdens have become quite the experts. David in particular is sought as a source of information on zebra breeding conditions. Some zebras will not breed in captivity, but they can be encouraged to do so by adding selenium, a trace mineral found in the soil of their natural African habitats, to their food, which consists of hay and a four-grain sweet feed. Although toxic in excess, selenium is necessary to the zebras’ breeding activity.

“We’ve become more efficient at this,” says Miki. “It used to be very time consuming at the beginning, but now we spend only about two hours a day in the fence.” Because the animals breed relatively slowly, giving birth to only one or two offspring at a time, and are not hardy, there has been no population explosion on the Holden ranch. The zebras are less complicated to raise. “Zebras,” Miki says, “are legally regarded as striped horses. You don’t need to do anything special to own a zebra. If you can have a horse, you can have a zebra.” The Holdens keep breeding stock, and they recently sold a pair, named Romeo and Juliet, to a local horse breeder (who, Miki says, is not planning to crossbreed them with his horses). As they are so common and so hardy, there is low demand for zebras from zoos, although the Holdens did sell one hand-raised baby to a petting zoo. Most of their sales stock goes to “people who love zebras”; they have had customers in Oregon, California, South Carolina, and Louisiana. “It turns out that lots of people have a tender spot for zebras,” says Miki.

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“We’ve become more efficient at this,” says Miki. “It used to be very time consuming at the beginning, but now we spend only about two hours a day in the early morning.” Which is a good thing too, as David is often away from home from Monday to Friday, and Miki teaches first grade locally. Every spring, when the goats have babies, she brings the schoolchildren on a field trip up to the ranch. “What I’ve consistently found though with first graders,” she says, “is that although the zebras and antelopes are exciting to look at, it’s bottle-feeding the baby goats and collecting eggs in the henhouse that they like most.”

—Carol Brévart
We welcome review copies of books by alumni. The books are donated to the Swarthmoreana section of McCabe Library after they have been noted for this column.


Peter G. Filene ’60, *In the Arms of Others: A Cultural History of the Right-to-Die in America*, Ivan R. Dee, 1998. When, if ever, is it right to withdraw life support? And who should decide? Taking readers into the lives of people who have struggled with the predicament of modern dying, Filene analyzes the legal, medical, and bioethical evidence through a century-long historical perspective.


James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff Jr. ’56, *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*, Longman, 1997. Examining a broad range of theoretical perspectives—traditional and behavioral, normative and scientific, qualitative and quantitative—this text takes an in-depth look at the factors shaping the present and emerging international system. Robert L. Pfaltzgraff Jr. and Richard H. Shultz Jr., *War in the Information Age: New Challenges for U.S. Security*, Brassey’s, 1997. The result of a conference convened by the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, this work represents the first serious effort to examine how the information age is shaping security environments and the conduct of warfare as we move into the next century.

Lewis Pyenson ’69 (ed.), *Writing and the Graduate Experience*, Graduate School, the University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1998. Four essays—craft and creation, style in academic prose, writing for scientific publications, and preparing theses and dissertations—offer encouragement and practical information for students preparing for graduate school writing. *Word and Icon: Saying and Seeing*, Graduate School, the University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1998. A product of the proceedings of the Third Graduate School Colloquium at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, this collection addresses the place of the word in an electronic age and whether it has a future with a generation raised on computer games and Internet ciphers.


Claudia Whitman, Julie (Biddle) Zimmerman ’68, and Tekla Miller (eds.), *Frontiers of Justice, Volume 2: Coddling or Common Sense?*, Biddle Publishing Co., 1998. This anthology, written by volunteers, professionals in law, crime victims, and offenders, makes the case for turning away from our revenge-based criminal justice system to supporting humane programs that are more effective in preventing crime and lowering recidivism.
Even the “good” wars are hell
Parades and hero homecomings don’t wash away the effects of war, finds Eric Dean ’72.

It’s a familiar portrait in books, movies, and television. The war-weary veteran struggles to fit into civilian life. He feels alienated from society, which he believes cannot possibly understand the hell he’s been through. Nervous and suspicious, quick to become alarmed by a threat or loud noise, he cannot settle into work or family life, cannot readjust. In extreme cases he may snap and go on a killing spree—or kill himself.

Americans usually associate the tormented veteran with the Vietnam War. But as Eric Dean ’72 shows in a recent book, significant numbers of Civil War soldiers suffered a similar plight.

“Back in the ’70s, the common rhetoric was that the Vietnam veterans’ problems were unique—that the problems of all prior veterans had been washed away by parades and the hero’s homecoming,” says Dean, author of Shook Over Hell: Post-Traumatic Stress, Vietnam, and the Civil War (Harvard, 1997). “It became this unshakable conventional wisdom. I was very suspicious of it when I started the book.”

Having completed law school and a stint in the Peace Corps, Dean was practicing law in his home state of Indiana when the book was conceived. While representing a murder suspect who had served in Vietnam, he corresponded with a potential expert witness who was an authority on post-combat stress. Dean decided the defense was too flimsy for the case, but a question was spawned: Was there any truth to the popular notion that the malady was unique to Vietnam veterans?

His Swarthmore-bred suspicion of black-and-white thinking was only sharpened when he began examining records in the Indiana State Archives. Case after case revealed stories not commonly heard in discussions of the Civil War, which tend to focus on gallant generals, brave men, and noble causes.

Dean was struck by the fate of soldiers like Lt. Allen Wiley of the 54th Indiana Infantry, who had a close call with a Confederate shell and never seemed to get over it. Comrades reported that he could no longer sleep for more than a few hours or concentrate on a task. His situation worsened at the war’s end. As one family member wrote, he “thought that someone (the neighbors) was going to shoot him.” Wiley began turning up at his sister’s house in the middle of the night, terrified that some unknown enemy was pursuing him. His condition led to domestic violence, divorce, and commitment in an asylum.

“I could see right off that Civil War veterans had problems that were similar to those associated with Vietnam veterans but that no one had investigated it at all,” Dean says. With such an investigation in mind, Dean left his law practice and enrolled in graduate school in history at Yale.

Shook Over Hell—the title comes from the words of a Union soldier describing his experience in a Confederate prison camp—has two principal threads. In addition to documenting the hardship of Civil War combat and its lasting effect on the participants, Dean also re-examines the postwar experience of those who fought in Vietnam. The book casts doubt on the idea that Vietnam veterans were maladjusted, much less half-crazed. Dean shows that in the 1970s and 1980s, Vietnam veterans enjoyed higher median incomes than their peers who didn’t serve and had similar rates of unemployment and drug addiction.

“The popular image of the troubled Vietnam veteran was driven by a political agenda,” says Dean, who opposed the war during his student days at Swarthmore but now is deeply ambivalent about it. “This image originally came out of the anti-war movement. People against the war were focusing on the damage the war was doing. My feeling is that people were so vehemently against the war that they were willing to exaggerate to get us out of it. While it started with the anti-war movement, other constituencies jumped on board.”

Dean believes that Ronald Reagan and other conservatives exaggerated post-traumatic stress disorder to drive home their point about the damage caused by the country’s less than full commitment to the war.

Although at least one reviewer has blasted Dean for a cavalier attitude toward Vietnam veterans’ suffering, his book seems part of a general retipping of the scales between America’s “good” and “bad” wars.

Cold Mountain, Robert Frazier’s best-selling 1997 novel, has as its protagonist a wounded Confederate deserter haunted and embittered by the violence of combat. Images of heroes like Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee are nowhere to be found.

Steven Spielberg’s Saving Private Ryan, which opened to glowing reviews this summer, depicts World War II combat with an unprecedented bluntness. Bruce Shapiro, writing in the online magazine Salon, contends that the U.S. military made a concerted effort to conceal the large numbers of psychological casualties that supposedly couldn’t happen in a morally righteous war.

Although his book and other works are beginning to stir a shift, “scholarship simply doesn’t understand the shell-shocked veteran,” Dean says. “I’m referring to the way that wars other than Vietnam are viewed as glorious and righteous—as heroic. War is horrible whatever the cause, and people lose sight of that basic fact. If anything, my book is a call to re-evaluate war and challenge the conventional wisdom that has shut off our ability to think critically about these issues.”

Despite the success of his book and his foray into academia, Dean has returned to being a lawyer in New Haven, a decision prompted by the scarcity of jobs in academia and the numerous offers he received when he sent his résumé out to law firms in the area. Nevertheless, he plans to continue his scholarly life and hopes to write another book, perhaps about the psychiatric toll of the two world wars.

“It’s interesting that the Library of Congress classified my book as psychology,” Dean says. “Others would say it’s about war. It seems to me the two are almost inseparable.”

—Tom Krattenmaker
Some people just don’t get it. They can’t understand why a man would be interested in what appears to be a woman’s problem—rape. But Jonathan Stillerman ’90 is undeterred by the perceptions of sexual violence as a women’s issue. As co-founder and codirector of the Men’s Rape Prevention Project (MRPP), a profeminist, nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C., Stillerman works to raise awareness of rape as a men’s issue and increase male involvement in anti-rape efforts.

MRPP comprises men of all ages and backgrounds who are concerned about the well-being of the women in their lives. Through community education and consulting with high school and college-age youth and the institutions that serve them, members challenge themselves and others to end rape and other forms of male violence.

MRPP’s charter states that “rape is a choice men make to exert power over others. As long as men continue to make this choice or to remain silent while other men are violent, rape will continue. We believe men can live peacefully with women, but to do so, we must redefine what it means to be a man.”

“Women alone have shouldered the burden of rape prevention for far too long,” Stillerman says. “For rape to stop, we as men must join women in speaking out against rape-supporting attitudes.

“We want to help people understand that while rape is one of the most blatant and violent forms of sexism, it is unlikely that any of us will ever come upon a rape in progress. What we are likely to witness, however, are many less violent behaviors and expressions of belief that contribute to a rape culture. For example, calling a woman a ‘bitch’ or ‘whore’ sends the message that women are not fully human or deserving of respect. When men see women as inferior, it becomes easier to do harm to them,” he says. “Just as with racism or other forms of oppression, it is the underlying sexist stereotypes and the behaviors that reinforce them that we must confront in order to stop rape before it ever starts.”

Stillerman, a clinical psychologist who received his doctorate from George Washington University in 1996 and now works as a therapist at the Alexander Institute in D.C., first took an interest in the issue of sexual violence upon learning of several women friends who had been assaulted. Although some of the reactions he had to his friends were supportive, Stillerman admits to having other, less supportive feelings: “To be honest, I felt pretty helpless and got angry at my friends for putting themselves at risk.” Stillerman says, “I’m embarrassed to admit it, but I even punched a wall once.”

These confusing feelings intensified during sexual assault awareness weeks as a junior and senior at Swarthmore. Stillerman recalls reading “horrifying” but true accounts of rape written by Swarthmore students on bulletin boards all over campus. “I was floored,” he recalls, “but I didn’t know where I could go to talk about what I felt.” It wasn’t until Stillerman came to DC in 1992 and discovered DC Men Against Rape (DCMAR), a men’s collective focused on men’s role in rape prevention, that he found a “safe place” to express what he was feeling and move beyond his sense of helplessness.

Over the next five years, Stillerman became increasingly involved in DCMAR, eventually assuming a leadership role. In 1997, he and colleague Patrick Lemmon transformed DCMAR into a professional nonprofit organization and changed the name to Men’s Rape Prevention Project.

Since then the demand for MRPP’s services has dramatically increased, and the organization has begun to write proposals seeking foundation grants to support its expansion. In the past year, MRPP conducted more than 50 workshops in high schools and universities throughout the country and presented at the Seventh International Conference on Sexual Assault and Harassment on Campus in Orlando, Fla. MRPP is also developing a rape prevention program as part of American University’s new student orientation program.

Most recently MRPP has begun to work with young men “at risk,” including athletes and fraternity members, and is assisting a local fraternity in organizing a day of campus events focused on raising men’s awareness of rape.

Stillerman says that men have a variety of reactions to MRPP’s workshops. Some embrace the message that “men can stop rape” and feel empowered. Others are threatened and defensive and try to dismiss MRPP’s speakers as gay or man haters. One of Stillerman’s friends went as far as to categorize a man who would be involved with this issue of rape prevention as a eunuch.

“Somehow a man speaking out against sexual violence is seen as unmanly or stripped of sexual desire, as if to be against rape is anti-male or anti-sex.” Because of these misinformed and sometimes even hostile reactions, Stillerman says it takes courage for men to speak out against rape and speak up when other men disrespect or degrade women. “It’s as if there’s a silent pact among men that forbids us to say something when a man puts a woman down. If you do, you’re out of the ‘manhood’ club.”

“Fortunately,” Stillerman says, “a growing number of men are beginning to understand that if being a man means supporting rape, we need to redefine masculinity.” Stillerman recalled one such man, a college student who approached him in tears after a workshop wanting to know how he could help his girlfriend who had been raped. “It’s experiences like that one that remind me why I got involved with this issue in the first place—to give men an opportunity to talk about how rape affects them and help them understand that no one is immune to the pain of rape, not even a man.”

More information about the project can be found on the World Wide Web at www.mrpp.org.

—Audree Penner
At our June 1997 class reunion, some of us discovered that the summer of 1952, when we had gone to European work camps, had been a defining experience of our adult lives. Part of its power lay in the fact that we did it for free and for fun long before the Peace Corps became an official program or community work earned you academic credit. But also, as Nell Goldstein Stern ’52 wrote me, as adults we have applied “the great lesson of working in the Friends’ way: with, not for, others.”

During our college years, we attended the weekend work camps in Philadelphia, started in 1947 by Dave Richie and his wife, Mary, and sponsored by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Dave recruited by word of mouth (at Swarthmore, Professor Willis Weatherford was his main contact), and he published a mimeographed newsletter, Fresh Paint, which was distributed to Philadelphia churches and schools to find families who needed help. Work campers stayed at a church or school from Friday night to Sunday afternoon. On Saturdays we worked, and on Sundays we went first to Quaker meeting.

The summer of 1950 Nell Stern went to a work camp at Valle de Brava, Mexico; in 1951 Elspeth Monro Reagan ’52 went to one on a Navajo reservation run by Mam and Uncle Bert Baily from Westtown School; and in 1950 Amy Blatchford Hecht ’52 was a “snake pit aide” with the American Friends Service Committee’s Institutional Service Unit at Columbus State Hospital and then in 1951 worked at Illinois’ Dixon State School for the mentally retarded. Pam Taylor Wetzels ’52 went to a New Hampshire work camp for kids from Harlem, where they rebuilt and painted the old farmhouse’s foundation and evenings read aloud to the kids. My roommate Sally Grinnell Metzger ’52 spent the 1950 summer (as I did) in Austria with the Experiment in International Living, which had “opened my eyes to the effect of World War II on people [there] ... five years after the war.”

These experiences led us to sign up with the American Friends Service Committee’s Quaker International Volunteer Service (QIV). The QIVers from our class were Esther Fiske Doherty, Amy Blatchford Hecht, Nell Goldstein Stern, Nancy Cliffe Vernon, Elspeth Monro Reagan, Jennifer Lee, and me.

Nell Stern and her parents already knew “that living my values was for me invaluable,” and Nancy Vernon’s father had been a classmate of QIV director Ed Wright. Elspeth Reagan’s parents “knew [and approved] of her interests,” whereas my parents probably preferred for me to take the State Department job I was offered but never said so.

We all felt that being “tourists” in war-torn Europe was wrong, though with Swarthmore still filled with World War II vets and commanding officers as well as classmates called up for the Korean War, we also understood the wish for an alternative to the draft. Amy Hecht summed it up by writing that the summer “fit my family’s priorities and beliefs ... and seemed like a logical and very interesting step.... I was really taken with what AFSC was doing ... the state of the world, pacifism and ... the continuing reconstruction of Europe.... And going to Europe was glamorous to a kid who had never been out of the country.”

Overseas work-camp assignments were handled by QIV director Ed Wright, the husband of Professor Elizabeth Wright, whose seminars Esther Doherty and I had taken. About half of

Abroad With the Quakers in the Summer of ’52
by Mary Alzina Stone Dale ’52

Bound for Europe
Numerous Swarthmoreans joined the Quaker International Volunteers (QIV) in the summer of 1952, helping to rebuild farms and villages in the aftermath of World War II. Sailing on converted troopships like the Arosa Kulm (top right), the volunteers spread out to work camps across the continent. Shown above with the QIV group aboard ship that same summer is Esther Fiske Doherty ’52 (third row, far left) and Nancy Cliffe Vernon ’52 (third row, second from right). The photo at right is taken from a QIV pamphlet of the time.
us paid our way over and back; some were given the trip by parents or grandparents. Elspeth Reagan had “saved for two years ... [and] the AFSC paid part of [the] costs.”

At camp we earned our room and board in return for work, but as Amy Hecht wrote, “money was tight.” She added that “there are some funny references in my letters home about how frugal I was being. I remember buying bread, cheese, and red wine to take on the train to Finland; in 24 hours the bread was as hard as a rock. We all learned to hitchhike, too, but did not write home to say so!”

Each group had a short orientation at Pendle Hill, where we spent mornings discussing dealing with different cultures and afternoons weeding the garden. We were warned to expect questions about American race relations, but no one told me that a Finnish camper would ask me why Americans were sandblasting Adolf Hitler’s name off German monuments.

We crossed the Atlantic in two groups on crowded converted troop ships with triple-decker bunk beds. Hecht, Reagan, Stern, and I sailed from Montreal on the Arosa Kulm. Bayard Rustin, the black civil rights leader, was on board and spoke to us over the intercom, and I had spirited breakfast conversations with a Jewish rabbi about Israel. The second group sailed on the Groote Beer with Christine Rosenblatt Downing ’52, who was heading for an international student meeting.

After landing at Le Havre, France, my group took the boat train to AFSC headquarters in Paris, past sidewalks painted with slogans like “Ridgway go home!” AFSC put us up in the Montmartre youth hostel until we left for camp. The second group landed at Rotterdam and left for camp from Amsterdam. Heading for Switzerland, Esther Doherty saw heavily bombed Cologne, where the cathedral stood in a sea of brickbats.

We quickly learned to catch trains and find strange places on our own, but QIVer Jo Sage and I spent half a day in a Finnish station because we could not read the train schedule, in which 1,300 hours equaled 1 p.m. We arrived at Rovaniemi, Finland, at dusk on Midsummer’s Night Eve (about 10 p.m.), sleeping on the floor of an
office. The next day Jo took one bus and I another. At a crossroads in the pine forest, the bus driver pointed up a forest trail, and I got off and soon found myself at a Swedish camp where the campers sang “Waltzing Matilda” to welcome me.

My work camp was housed in two abandoned army barracks, and our camp joke was that camp would be over the day the floor fell in. The only other American was Buddy Siegel, who spoke less Finnish, French, or German than I. My chum was Esther, a hitchhiking young Swiss pianist who later became a harpsichord professor at Bern.

Our Finnish camp leader had been left for dead as a teenager on a Russian battlefield, but he hated Swedes more than Russians and barely spoke to our young Swedish leader. Camp meetings were held in Finnish but required translations to Swedish, German, French, and, finally, English. We argued about work hours but took long coffee breaks when our farmers loved to tease me if a Russian beat an American at the (off-limits) Helsinki Olympics. One day in the fields, where we dug drainage ditches or pried out tree roots, a Finnish farmer’s wife said that I worked like a “true Finn.” I drank coffee like one, too. After camp ended I went to Helsinki, where Jo Sage’s camp friends kindly took me in. When we left they gave each of us a single sweet pea, as costly there as a dozen roses.

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Nell Stern’s time was spent in an
Italian camp near San Nicola da Crissa, south of Rome. She stayed in an unfinished school house, eating “cement dust.” The work campers had to carry their water from the town well, and many, including Nell, contracted hepatitis. They built a wash house so the village women would not freeze while doing laundry, terraced fields so the hills could be farmed better, and taught canning “so it wouldn’t be summer feast and winter famine.”

She became good friends with one of the villagers and her daughter, later sending her packages, and was photographed wearing her party dress, but she suspects it was Sam Slie, an African American who spoke fluent Italian, who fascinated the villagers the most.

Elspeth Reagan was the only American in a Swedish work camp in Büchenbuhl, near Nuremberg, Germany. They built new housing for young couples, bombed-out families, and Czech refugees, and everyone eligible for housing helped with the work. Elspeth wrote that she had “an intense and useful learning experience in community living and in getting on with people of other backgrounds and languages.” She also had a proposal of marriage from the Danish camp leader and remembers watching wood carvers making replicas of the medieval woodwork destroyed by American bombing.

About half of us ended up in the countries we were assigned to, but Amy Hecht, Nancy Vernon, and Esther Doherty went to more than one camp. In France Amy Hecht first went to a refugee center in Sucy-en-Brie run by a Protestant organization called “La Cimade.” It housed displaced persons from Eastern Europe and raised Angora rabbits, vegetables, and pigs. The work campers went to Paris on Bastille Day, and Amy even helped run a Sunday service in French. Later she went to a camp near Nantes, where they built houses. She found that women were supposed to do the cooking and laundry (my Finnish camp just took turns cooking oatmeal or boiling potatoes), but after Amy and fellow QIVer Nan Gouinlock tie-dyed the camp laundry, they got to unload red-roof tiles from railroad cars instead. The campers also hitchhiked in pairs to Rennes, Saint-Malo, and Mont-Saint-Michel. Amy was impressed because such “wonderful people had so little money ... as well as by the strange feeling that Americans were not universally liked.” Americans had bombed Nantes’ submarine pens on school holidays when children were outside playing.

At her first camp at Bern, Switzerland, Esther Doherty worked long days building roads by crushing rock and clearing land. At Esther’s second Swiss camp at Canton Wallis, they cleared out a building for next summer’s work camp; then at her third in Austria, they built a schoolhouse.

Nancy Vernon went to camps in Sweden, Germany, and Wales and remembers that “Sweden was beautiful and much cushier than Germany.” At Ludwigshafen, Germany, she met Penn student Martha Ono Uyeki, who had sailed with her group. They built homes for refugees, living in a new youth hostel and traveling to the work sites by streetcar. Marty Uyeki writes that compared with her Austrian camp, Ludwigshafen had a lively group spirit, held discussions, had speakers from the community, went to local fairs, and took weekend trips together.

When camp ended Nancy and Marty went to Zurich, where I met them and Nell Stern at the youth hostel. Then Nancy and I hitchhiked over the Alps to Venice to meet Esther Doherty and a friend of mine from Chicago on September 1, just as we had planned months ago in Worth’s K Section.

Everyone except me soon went home to a job or school. I wanted to be an expatriate writer, but after hanging about London that fall with classmate Marie deKiewiet Hemphill, who was attending the University of London, I changed my mind and headed home. Like the rest, I remember best the shock of seeing how very rich America was.

The Alumni Council and the Career Planning and Placement Office (CP&P) are continuing their successful partnership to help students explore vocational options. Externships are an ideal way to introduce students to the challenges and rewards in various fields and to demonstrate what it takes to succeed.

Last year more than 150 Swarthmore students participated in this program, which was described in the March Bulletin. Volunteers who provide externships or housing often value the experience as much as the students.

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I/we may be interested in offering:
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